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ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

TWO LITERARY SOCIETIES

OF

WAKE FOREST COLLEGE,

JUNE 9, 1852.

BY

HON. ROMULUS M. SAUNDERS.

Published by order of the Philomathesian Society.

RALEIGH:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM W. HOLDEN.

1852.



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PHILOMATHESIAN HALL, June 10th, 1852.

SIR:

The undersigned have been appointed, by the Philomathesian Society, to return you its most sincere thanks for your very able and instructive Address delivered before the two Literary Societies of this Institution, and to request a copy for publication.

With great respect,

A. J. ROGERS,
WM. BRINKLEY,
WM. C. FINCH,
Committee.

ILON. R. M. SAUNDERS.

WAKE FOREST, June 10th, 1852.

GENTLEMEN:

I am favored with your note of this date; and if I have been so fortunate in my address as to have presented an historical epitome of the State, in a way to claim the approbation of the Society, and to excite in its members a more lively interest in our State's history, it will ever be to me a source of pleasing recollection.

The address is at your disposal, with many thanks for the obliging attentions of the Committee.

Most respectfully, &c.

R. M. SAUNDERS.

To A. J. ROGERS,
WM. BRINKLEY,
WM. C. FINCH,
Committee.

ADDRESS.

YOUNG GENTLEMEN OF THE EUZELIAN AND PHILOMATHESIAN SOCIETIES:

Nineteen years have elapsed since the General Assembly of the State incorporated "The Trustees of the Wake Forest Institute," and five years thereafter, by an amendatory act, enlarged its charter into that of "The Trustees of Wake Forest College," for the promotion of learning and virtue, with the power "of conferring all such degrees and marks of Literary distinction as are usually conferred in Colleges or Universities." During this long and anxious period, the Trustees have had great embarrassment and many difficulties to encounter, which they have met with that manly resolution, that entitles them to the thanks and gratitude of the community.

Nothing, I assure you, could have induced me to place myself before you, in obedience to the call of one of your Literary Societies, but a desire to gratify my young friends, and at the same time to second as far as may be in my power, the efforts of those who are displaying such a commendable zeal in sustaining the fortunes of this Institution. Why this large and respectable assemblage on the present as well as upon many previous occasions, but the great interest on the part of the public, for the advancement and prosperity of the College? What brings together the father and mother, the brother and sister, as well as so many anxious friends and relatives, but their deep solicitude for your individual encouragement? It is an occasion well calculated to excite the youthful mind and to make

a deep impression upon those who are called to take part in these interesting ceremonies. It is not one of those spectacles where we are obliged to court the illusions of fancy, and where a single touch of the wand of reason dispels the enchantment. Here all is real, affecting, and interesting. Indulge me, then, while catching the glow of that general interest which the occasion has kindled, I venture to address you on a subject which, however void of novelty, cannot fail to command attention. And as my purpose in appearing before you, is that of being useful, rather than from any expectation of literary distinction, I feel that I cannot so well advance my object as by exciting in your youthful bosoms an ardent devotion and manly pride, in whatever concerns the character, honor, and fame of our native land. To this end, I shall call your attention to *The early History and present Resources of the State*. I design to vindicate the truth of history, and flatter myself in being able not only to enlist you in the cause of truth, but to engage you as future advocates for the development of those resources, the judicious application of which cannot fail to promote the improvement and advancement of the State. If it be true, as Lord Bolingbroke has said, and others have so often repeated after him, "That history is philosophy teaching by example," then no study can be more useful to the ingenious youth seeking the improvement of the mind, than the history of his own country; nor examples more interesting for his contemplation than the distinguished men who have contributed so largely to the foundation of the republic. If this is to be the theatre of your future actions, whether your object be the pulpit, the forum, the halls of legislation, or the cultivation of the soil, the history of your own, your native land, will prove alike pleasing and instructive. Here you will learn the

trials and sufferings which the early settlers had to encounter in order to gain an abiding place in the New World; and what the humble Christian had to endure in being allowed the high privilege of worshipping the Great Creator according to the dictates of his own conscience. Here, too, you will be able to trace and to study the rise and progress of the laws, from their first rough sketches to their more perfect enactments, and the causes and occasions which called them forth in the government of an infant community. Here, likewise, you will learn and be able to appreciate the wrongs and oppressions which drove our forefathers from their mother land, and induced them to seek an asylum in the wilderness, through whose dusky shades the wild savage wandered, and by his horrible yells disturbed the intrepid settler in his humble cottage.

Yet I very much fear, notwithstanding these general inducements, this branch of science is too much neglected, or if studied at all, but superficially. When a few years since a foreign journal in criticising an American work, asked with an insolent sneer, "Who was Patrick Henry?" we felt inclined to smile at the ignorant impertinence; and yet, I doubt if our youth and even those of riper years, are free from the reproach of neglecting the study of their own State's history for less valuable information. This may be owing in part to the fact, that we have no State historian calculated to interest the reader by his classical style or the beauty of his narration. And yet we have, as general historians, a Marshall, a Ramsay and a Bancroft of high character, with a Williamson and Martin, and more recent interesting sketches of the State; and though the former of these State historians may be somewhat dull and monotonous, still they are calculated to afford information of value to a North-Carolina reader. Into some

of these matters it is my purpose to inquire, and to vindicate as far as I may be able, and the truth shall warrant, some things, in which, as I think, injustice has been done to the State. The discovery by Columbus of a New World, is the most memorable event in the annals of the age. His bold and resolute spirit had well nigh sunk under the repeated disappointments to which he was subjected, before embarking in his noble enterprise. It was reserved for a female, Isabella the Catholic of Spain, to furnish the means of enabling him to engage in his hazardous undertaking. The most interesting narrative of his first voyage is to be found in the pages of Robertson and Irving. And it remains a disputed point, which of these authors is most to be admired in his description of this highly exciting event. No reader can rise from the chapters in which are given the details of the voyage, its various and trying incidents and its triumphant result, without having his feelings excited beyond the power of language to describe. But the narrative, however eloquent the language, thrilling the events, or beautiful the description, is lost in the mighty event which it records. "Columbus," says the Scotch historian, "was the first European who set foot in the New World, which he had discovered. He landed in a rich dress and with a naked sword in his hand. His men followed, kneeling down they kissed the ground which they had so long desired to see. They next erected a crucifix and prostrating themselves before it, returned thanks to God, for conducting their voyage to such a happy issue"; when they took possession of the country with the most impressive formalities, for the Crown of Castile and Leon. The grandeur and success of the mighty event leaves it in doubt whether we are most to admire the profound sagacity of him who conceived the thought of the discovery of a New

World, or the persevering industry and undaunted boldness with which he carried it into execution. It might be highly interesting to follow the great discoverer through his various trials, to the end of his illustrious career, but that other matters claim our attention. It may not, however, be out of place to say that Columbus, after spending many years in the service of Spain, finally returned to claim at the hands of its sovereign, the restoration of "his honors and estates" of which he had been so wrongfully deprived. Ferdinand only amused him with fair words and empty promises, until worn out by the fatigue and hardships he had suffered, and broken down by his infirmities, he sunk to his grave with that composure of mind becoming his high character, and closed his eventful life, with words, as recorded by Irving, evincing the deepest feeling of piety—"In manus tuas Domine commendabo, Spiritum meum." Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit! But I proceed. For several years the Spaniards and French became rivals in the discoveries which followed. The Southern section of North America was discovered by the Spaniards in 1512, to which they gave the name of Florida. They were the founders of St. Augustine, by forty years the oldest town in the United States. They had well nigh abandoned the country, when the French inspired by religious zeal and a desire to establish an asylum for the persecuted Huguenots and Protestants, engaged in these new discoveries. They were not more fortunate, and having left a part of their adventurers on the St. Johns, and given name to the country—Carolina—in honor of their sovereign, they returned to their homes. The Spaniards soon after returning to the country, destroyed their rivals, and were themselves in like manner destroyed by the French, each leaving behind mementoes of the most savage cruelty;

thus showing that the demons of civil and religious persecution had crossed the Atlantic and lost nothing of the dark bigotry and vindictive spirit, which led to the revocation of the edict of Nantes, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the establishment of the Inquisition. Hitherto the discoveries and attempts to settle and colonize the North American continent, had been confined to the adventurers of Spain and France. The English now embarked in the noble but hazardous enterprize. Sir Walter Raleigh, in the year 1584, obtained a grant from Queen Elizabeth, for "the discovery and planting new lands and countries, not actually possessed by any Christians." He immediately fitted out two vessels in pursuit of the lands, which his sovereign had thus granted him. It is not easy to ascertain to a certainty, the part of the coast which was first discovered by the adventurers. It is quite certain, however, they first cast anchor at Wocacan, an Island supposed to be among those at the mouth of Albemarle Sound. They entered the Sound and landed on Roanoke Island, within the present limits of Currituck County. This, like several other attempts under the auspices of Sir Walter Raleigh, proved unsuccessful; and though he had the honor of planting the first English settlement in North America, and that within the province of Carolina, where was born the first of the Saxon race in 1587—a female, christened Virginia Dare—the whole soon perished, leaving no vestige behind but its new made graves to tell the sad tale of its brief existence. Such being the unfortunate result of Sir Walter Raleigh's attempts to plant a colony in the New World, he was forced five years after the date of his patent, to assign over to Thomas Smith and other adventurers of London, the rights and privileges which had been so generously granted him by his sovereign. But the name of Raleigh

will ever stand among the highest and brightest of those, who first sought the colonization of the country. And all must lament the hard fate of "the soldier, scholar and statesman," who was doomed to suffer an untimely death, under the hands of a common executioner. In the Tower of London, at this day, is exhibited to the sight-seeing and curious, among the relics of past ages, the axe and the block with and on which was closed the life of this illustrious victim. The charge, the trial, the conviction, the sentence, its suspension for fifteen years and final execution, under which the atrocity was perpetrated of ordering him to be beheaded, drawn and quartered—alike disgraceful to the King, his Attorney General and Judges—altogether constitute one of the most extraordinary and unparalleled occurrences in the annals of judicial murders. What would be thought at the present day, of an Attorney General who could use, or of a Judge who could permit such terms as "Traitor, Monster, Viper and Spider of Hell," to be applied to one on trial for his life, and that one of the most illustrious men of the kingdom, and whose only provocation was the defence of himself, "with temper, eloquence, and courage"? Never, perhaps, has any case occurred so fully illustrative of the justice of the response as told of a Roman Emperor, as the case of Sir Walter Raleigh; when asked, "Who can be guilty, if it be sufficient to deny?" "And who," answered the noble Roman, "can be innocent, if it be sufficient to accuse!" Here accusation supplied the place of proof, and denial was construed into guilt. But, I am proud to say, the Legislature of our own State, in 1792, sought to blot out this foul stain from the memory of this great man, by giving his name to our State Capitol—*estō perpetua*.

The London Company, on the attainder of Sir Walter Raleigh for High Treason, obtained in 1606, a new

charter from the crown, extending over the provinces of Virginia and Carolina, which they managed by a Governor and Council. This Company enlisted in its service, the celebrated John Smith, already distinguished by his chivalrous adventures and bold intrepidity, and who became still more famous in being saved by the intrepid Pocahontas, and as the founder of the Colony from which Virginia and Carolina were peopled. The Company, under various changes of fortune, continued its existence until 1624, when a judgment of forfeiture was had against it, and the succeeding year its patent cancelled and the Company dissolved. From this period during the reign of Charles the first, and the Protectorate of Cromwell, little occurs of that peculiar interest to claim an especial notice ; as in a discourse of his kind, simple allusion must supply the place of full detail. The intolerant spirit of civil and religious persecution, which had forced many a victim to abandon the mother country, and to take refuge in the Colonies, compelled them to flee still further into the wilderness, to avoid the power of their persecutors. The peace-abiding Quaker, and unoffending sectarian, were thus obliged to fly or suffer under ecclesiastical and civil despotism. They sought the banks of the Roaneke and Chowan, then the abode of the wild savage, as a retreat from the persecutions of civilized men, and where there existed no legitimate government to oppress them. Here the founders of the Albemarle Colony were allowed, for near twenty years, to enjoy freedom of conscience and a government of their own choice. But they were not thus to elude "the powers that be." Charles the 2nd had been restored to his throne. Of this King it has been recorded that "he never said a foolish thing, nor ever did a wise one" ; yet he certainly evinced his sagacity and foresight, by the

favor and encouragement he extended to the American Colonies. Having obtained the concurrence of his Council in pronouncing the previous grants and charters null and void for their *non user*, in 1663 (as enlarged two years thereafter) he granted the Province of Carolina from "about 36° 30' north latitude, westwardly to the South Seas," to the Duke of Albemarle, Earl of Clarendon, and six others, as Lords Proprietors, who obtained the country under pretence of "a pious zeal for the promotion of the gospel," and used it to administer to their own wealth and dignity. The province was divided into two Counties, the Albemarle, bordering on the Roanoke, and Clarendon, on the Cape Fear. **WILLIAM DRUMMOND** was the first Governor ; and according to Bancroft, so carelessly has the History of the State been written, that neither his name, merits, or end are correctly stated. He is represented to have been a man of prudence and judgment, deeply imbued with a passion for popular liberty ; and after instituting a simple form of government, suitable to the condition of an infant people, he left them to the free exercise of their own consciences and the restraint of laws of their own making. The first Assembly, of which we have any authentic account, was held in 1669, and though there existed no press in the country for many years thereafter, (Swan's collections of acts, printed by James Davis, Newbern 1752,) the laws then enacted were confirmed, re-enacted and of binding power for more than half a century. The Lords Proprietors were not disposed to leave the Colony to the operation of laws in accordance with the habits and taste of the people, but desired to have a government to "agree as nearly as possible to the Monarchy of which it was a part, and to avoid creating a numerous Democracy." To effect this, they assigned the duty to the Earl of Shaftsbury, a

man of distinguished talents, who called to his aid the celebrated John Locke, who produced a code, styled the "Fundamental Constitutions"; and most fitly has it been pronounced by a competent judge, "never did human ingenuity devise a more striking specimen of inveterate folly." A system of government, with its badges of aristocracy and vassalage, for an infant colony of some six thousand inhabitants, sufficiently demonstrates, however profound its author may have been as a metaphysician, that he was most singularly deficient as a practical politician. The attempt on the part of the Proprietors to enforce their favorite code, was met by the Colonists with the most decided opposition. The contest became warm and the parties were designated as the Court and Country—the Royalist and Republican parties of the mother country. The Royalists claimed the right of prohibiting the Colonies from exporting their produce anywhere but to the mother country and of levying taxes at will, without the consent of the latter. This enforcement of the navigation act and the imposition of a tax of a penny a pound on Tobacco shipped from the Colony, led to open resistance. And we have in this act of resistance on the part of the people of Albemarle, an exhibition of the revolution in miniature. Yet it has been represented by one of the historians of the State, as evidence of a disorderly and revolutionary spirit, and the leader as deserving the gibbet for his attempt to excite the "poor to plunder the rich." Whereas, the truth of history exhibits it as the first practical denial of the power of Parliament to tax the Colonies in derogation of their chartered rights. This was in 1677. The people of Albemarle were triumphant—the royal tax-gatherer was forced to give up his ill-gotten gains and fled the country in order to complain to the Lords Proprietors. He was followed by

the bold leader, John Culpeper, who justified his conduct and claimed to be tried by a Jury of the vicinage. Thus was raised, for the first time in regard to the Colonies, the celebrated question, which in after times became a ground of complaint in the Declaration of Independence—how far it was competent to try an American Colonist charged with treason before an English Court and Jury. The question was decided against the accused ; he was tried and acquitted by the jury under the influence of Earl Shaftesbury, then the prime minister of the realm. It has been remarked by an eloquent English historian, “the primary and most efficient characteristic of a limited monarchy is, that money can only be levied upon the people through the consent of their representatives” ; and he adds, “the most brilliant diadem in the coronet of British liberty, is the representation in the House of Commons and the trial by jury,”—and to which I would add, Religious toleration and a Free Press, as the two brightest gems in the diadem of a representative government. And yet, notwithstanding this proud boast, we have in the humble transaction to which I have been referring, an attempt on the part of Englishmen to violate these great principles, so indispensable to the protection of life and property. And what is more to my purpose, we have in the record of this remote affair, the first successful assertion of these rights on the part of the Colonists, and there discover the cradle in which was rocked the infant spirit, that one hundred years thereafter animated our forefathers in the great contest of 1776.

I hasten with all possible brevity to events of greater magnitude and which entitle the State to still higher distinctions. In the year 1729 the government was changed from proprietary to that of royal—the Lords Proprietors, with the exception of the Earl Granville,

having surrendered their charter to the Crown. Henceforth the Colony is placed under the authority of royal Governors; commencing with Governor Burrington, continued under Governors Johnston, Dobbs and Tryon, and terminating with Governor Martin, a period of forty-seven years. I shall not attempt to trace the history of the Colony, its various incidents and vicissitudes during this very important period, farther than may be necessary to the introduction of the subjects it is my purpose particularly to examine. Most justly has it been remarked by a sagacious and intelligent historian of our own country, "that between limited monarchy and representative government, there seems to be no ground for political happiness." As we have seen, there had been the most incessant contentions between the proprietors and the inhabitants; and even after the government of the Colony came under the authority of the Crown, things in this respect did not greatly improve. The government, as conferred on the Colony, purported to be after the model of the British Constitution. It consisted of a Governor, Council and Assembly—the Governor and Council appointed by the Crown, the Assembly by the people, the Governor having the power to convene, prorogue and dissolve the Assembly, as well as to veto its laws; and such as he sanctioned, had still to be approved by the Crown, while Parliament claimed the omnipotent power of creating laws at its discretion. Although the Colony increased in population and wealth under the royal government, it was not long before the great contest arose between the prerogatives of the Crown and the liberty of the subject. In the year 1765, Governor Tryon succeeded to the government of the Colony—a year memorable in our Colonial history, for those Parliamentary enactments, which soon produced an open rupture. In this year

was passed the celebrated Stamp Act, and, though repealed the year following, it was but a few years before taxes were imposed on other articles, and the King advised that all such as might refuse payment should be brought to England for trial. This assertion of the right of taxation on the part of Parliament, without the consent of the Colonies, was most manfully resisted, and no where with more spirit than by the Colonists of North Carolina. The Assembly, as early as 1769, "*Resolved*, that the sole right of imposing taxes on the inhabitants of North Carolina has ever been vested in the House of Assembly, and that trials for treason, committed in the Colony, ought to be had here, and the removal and trial of suspected persons beyond sea is derogatory of the rights of British subjects." The Governor declared this resolution "had sapped the foundation of confidence and gratitude," and thereupon dissolved the Assembly. I am forced to pass over an occurrence which transpired about this time, and which I would gladly notice, but for the fear of being tedious. I allude to the measures as adopted by the Regulators, and which led to an open rebellion. This transaction has been highly colored by our early historians, as is clearly evinced by the original documents, as recently obtained from the Foreign Office in England and published by Mr. Wheeler in his valuable "*Sketches of the State*." These documents fully show, whatever may have been said or written on the subject, and into whatever excesses the Regulators may have been driven, that they were greatly oppressed by the most shameful extortions, and were quite as much sinned against as sinning. I cannot fail to notice the spirited reply of the principal leader of the Regulators when called on by the Governor for his taxes, which shows the true character of the transaction: "We pay to honest men, and not to swindlers."

I proceed with my narrative. In 1774 Governor Martin, the last of the royal Governors, was appointed to the government of the Colony. He had neither the talent, discretion or abilities to qualify him for the station to which he was called. I cannot dally by the way, but hasten on to those acts of a belligerent character, which led to open revolution. The first of these was the appointment by the Assembly in 1773, of a committee of vigilance and correspondence, with directions to inform themselves as to the proceedings of the ministry of a hostile tendency, and to the injury of the Colonies. This was the first important step, looking to a direct concert of action with the other Colonies. It was followed by public meetings in the several counties and principal towns, recommending the appointment of delegates to a general Convention, to be held in Newberne. The first provincial Congress accordingly assembled in Newberne, in August, 1774. A Continental Congress had also been proposed, to consist of delegates from each of the Colonies. Our Provincial Congress promptly responded to this call, and appointed Richard Caswell, William Hooper, and Joseph Hughes as its delegates to the Continental Congress. This august body met in Philadelphia on the 5th of September, 1774. It is said, "a silence, awful and protracted, preceded the breaking of the last seal," and that astonishment and applause filled the House, when this was announced by Patrick Henry. They adopted a declaration of rights—pointed out the different acts of Parliament, held in violation of their privileges—recommended the formation of associations with the proper test, and passed with great unanimity a resolution enjoining upon all true friends of the country, *non-importation*, *non-consumption*, and *non-exportation* of any article from or to the mother country; thus imposing on themselves

a system of disinterested self-denial, enforced by no law nor guarded by any penal sanction, but resting entirely on the patriotism of the people, and their devotion to the common cause, and carried out in a way that challenges its equal in the history of the world. The Provincial Congress, after the adoption of a resolution "against the power of taxation, except with the consent of the representatives of the people, and any other tax a gross violation of the great charter of their liberties," adjourned, subject to the call of their Moderator. The second Provincial Congress was again held in Newberne, in April, 1775, and met on the same day with that of the Colonial Assembly. John Harvey, of the County of Perquimons, was elected Speaker of the Assembly and Moderator of the Congress. The Governor had endeavored to deter the people from electing, and the delegates from holding, their Congress. But neither were to be deterred by his royal menaces. The fact that John Harvey should have been elected, and have had the boldness to preside over both Assemblies, evidenced the spirit of the times, and that they were men, neither to be alarmed or seduced by the powers or smiles of those in authority. If we are allowed to judge of the character of the man by the part he was called upon to act—the duties he discharged—the flattering resolution of thanks voted by the bodies over which he presided—I should say John Harvey must have been a man of highly reputable talents, courteous in his address, diligent in the discharge of his duties, and that he could not fail to impress upon his associates his entire fitness to enjoy their full confidence. But the cause of the country was not long to have the benefit of his valuable services. He was cut off at a time when his ardent patriotism must have been most sensibly excited by the stirring events then daily gaining fresh interest, and in

which doubtless he would have borne a conspicuous part. He was held, as I learn from a private source, in great esteem, and his death deeply lamented. The Provincial Congress elected their delegates to the Continental Congress, whose acts they highly approved, and having denounced the proclamation of the Governor interdicting their meeting as "a wanton and arbitrary exercise of power," they adjourned, subject to the call of their Moderator. The Colonial Assembly being equally refractory with that of the people's Congress, were dissolved after a session of only four days. The third Provincial Congress was assembled in Hillsborough in August, 1775, and so general had been the feeling of discontent, and so determined the spirit of resistance, that 184 members attended, every county and town in the Colony being represented. They came to the solemn resolution, "That the Parliament of Great Britain had no right to impose taxes upon the Colonies, or to regulate their internal police; and that all such attempts should be resisted to the utmost, and they would cheerfully bear their proportion of the expense necessary for the support of an army." This resolution speaks the language of open resistance, and that the Colonists had taken their position and nerved their spirits for the contest, however hazardous the result. They accordingly appointed a Provincial Council with executive powers, Committee of safety, with county and town Committees, who were armed with full power for the government of the province. The Continental Congress re-assembled at Philadelphia, on the 10th of May, 1775, an assembly as has been justly stated, "one of the most august the world has ever witnessed." It continued in session, with short intervals, until after the declaration of Independence. On assembling, they found all hopes of peace had fled, and that preparations for a

vigorous resistance were loudly called for. On the 15th June, GEORGE WASHINGTON was appointed commander-in-chief of the American forces, with a pledge that they would "assist and adhere to him with their lives and fortunes." In the meantime, General Gage had opened the bloody drama of war at Lexington on the 19th April, 1775. I have thus anticipated, in some degree, the important movement, to which I purpose to call your especial attention, it being necessary to have these dates and events distinctly stated, in order fully to appreciate the momentous occurrence which I now design to examine, and which I am frank to say was the great object in the selection of my subject. I allude to the Mecklenburg Resolves of May, 1775, one of the most extraordinary events in the annals of the revolution. As the subject has and is still attracting great attention, you will pardon me for entering upon this investigation with some degree of particularity. It is a subject of deep interest to the State, and from what has transpired, I feel called upon to examine the question with candor, to consult every accessible authority, fairly and fully to state the proofs, so that all may judge how the matter really stands. As I am addressing young gentlemen, students of the State, who should be accurately informed as to a point of such great moment in our revolutionary history, I would not knowingly mislead them, or leave them in error. The people of Mecklenburg county claim the honor of having, at Charlottestown on the 20th May, 1775, adopted Resolutions declaring themselves free and independent of the British Crown.

The fact has been called in question—how stands the proofs? In the Raleigh Register of the 30th April, 1819, there appeared a communication by *Joseph Mc-Knitt Alexander*, relative to the Mecklenburg Declara-

tion of Independence. His account, in substance, was, that his father, *John McKnitt Alexander*, (who died in 1817,) had left in his hands certain papers, on which he predicated his statement; that a public meeting had been called under the order of *Col. Adam Alexander*, to consist of two delegates from each Captain's company of Mecklenburg, to meet at Charlottestown on the 19th May, 1775; that the meeting was held accordingly, when it was organized by the appointment of *Abraham Alexander*, Chairman, and *John McKnitt Alexander*, Clerk; that after a free and full discussion it was *Resolved*,

1. "That whoever directly or indirectly abetted, or in any way, form or manner countenanced the unchartered and dangerous invasion of our rights, as claimed by Great Britain, is an enemy to the Country, to America, and to the interests and inalienable rights of man.

2. That we, the citizens of Mecklenburg County, do hereby dissolve the political bands which have connected us with the mother country, and hereby absolve ourselves from all allegiance to the British Crown, and abjure all political connection, contract, and association with that nation, who have wantonly trampled on our rights and liberties, and inhumanly shed the blood of American patriots at Lexington.

3. That we do hereby declare ourselves a free and independent people; are, and of right ought to be, a sovereign and self-governing association, under the control of no power, other than that of our God, and the General Government of the Congress; to the maintenance of which independence, we solemnly pledge to each other our mutual co-operation, our lives, our fortunes, and our most sacred honor."

Two other resolutions were adopted, relative to the civil and military affairs and laws for the government of the country. That, after sitting in the Court House all night and discussing every paragraph, the resolutions were passed unanimously, on the 20th May, 1775. That Capt. *James Jack* was sent as an express with the proceedings to be delivered to the State delegates, *Richard Caswell*, *William Hooper*, and *Joseph Hughes*, to be laid before Congress, then in session at Philadelphia. That they received for answer, that the resolutions were

approved, but it was considered premature to lay them before Congress—that the original record of the proceedings was burnt in *April*, 1800, but copies had been sent to Hugh Williamson, then engaged in writing the history of the State, and to Gen. William R. Davie. Such is the statement as published, and the question is, how far is this statement corroborated or invalidated by the proofs? I submit the affirmative and negative testimony, which I shall endeavor to state truly and at the same time with all possible brevity:

1. The testimony as collected by Col. *William Polk*, in 1820, and published in pamphlet, 1822, under his authority. He states, though a youth, he was present at the meeting, and concurs "in the correctness of the facts generally," as given by Dr. Alexander, except as to the names of the officers, in which he thinks there are errors.

2. The certificate of Gen. *George Graham* and three other aged persons who state they were at the meeting, which was called by Col. *Thomas Polk*, and that Dr. *Ephraim Brevard* was the Secretary; the resolutions were drawn by him and reported from a committee on the 20th May; they declared "the people of Mecklenburg County free and independent of the King and Parliament of Great Britain." The proceedings were sent to the Congress by Capt. *James Jack*, who returned with an answer.

3. Letter of *John Simson*, who says he has "conversed with many old friends and others—all agree as to the main point, but few can state the particulars." The order for the meeting was given by Col. *Thomas Polk*; the declaration was drawn by Dr. *Brevard*, cannot speak with certainty as to dates—thinks "the close of May," and that Thomas Polk, John Phifer, and Joseph Kennedy were appointed a committee to collect military stores. .

4. *Francis Cummins* says, he was a student in the Queen's Museum, a college in Charlotte; that many of the citizens of Mecklenburg held a public meeting in 1775, at the Court House and proclaimed Independence by their herald, Col. Thomas Polk.

5. The certificate of Capt. *James Jack*, who says he was present and heard the "resolutions proclaimed from the Court House door"; that he was the bearer of the proceedings, in June, and delivered "the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence of May, 1775, to the State delegates in Congress." Such is the testimony as published in the Polk pamphlet of 1822. The General Assembly, at its session of 1830, appointed a committee to "examine, collate, and arrange all such documents as might be accessible, touching the Declaration of Independence by the citizens of Mecklenburg County." From the pamphlet as thus published under the authority of the Legislature, I give the additional testimony:

1. The certificate of Dr. *Henderson*, November, 1830, that he found among the papers of Gen. W. R. Davie, soon after his death, 1820, a paper which he recognized as being in the hand writing of John McKnitt

• Alexander, and which he gave to his son Dr. Alexander. This paper is identical with that as published in the Register of 1819, and is dated *September, 1800.*

2. Letter of Gen. *Joseph Graham*, October, 1830. He states he was at this meeting, then about sixteen years of age; on the 20th May, after organizing and much discussion "the question was taken, and they resolved to declare themselves independent." That as "the King or Ministry had by proclamation declared the Colonies out of the protection of the British crown; they ought to declare themselves out of his allegiance, and resolve an independence"; that Dr. Brevard re-

ported the resolutions, "as near as he can recollect in the very words since seen in print."

3. *Rev. Humphrey Hunter's* memoir: That the five resolutions, as now published, were reported and adopted, and on the 20th May, Dr. Brevard appointed to draft "a definite statement of grievances, together with a more correct and formal declaration of Independence." The memoir states the author being present on the 20th May, 1775, "was a deeply interested spectator, was then 20 years and 14 days old." This is clearly an error, as he says he was born the 14th May, 1775. So that whether you calculate according to the Julian or *old* style or according to the Gregorian or *new* style, which commenced in England in 1752, neither computation would correspond with the 19th or 20th May. The memoir is dated in 1827, and appears to be a response to a request made by Dr. Alexander, and thus loses, in some degree, the authority to which it might otherwise have been entitled, had it been a contemporaneous production.

4. Letter of *John Davidson*, October 1830. He says: "John McKnitt Alexander and myself were chosen from our company." After being organized "a motion was made to declare ourselves independent of the Crown of Great Britain and carried by a large majority." He does not speak particularly as to date, further than it was before the national declaration. Capt. Jack carried on the proceedings, and brought back an answer.

Such is the published testimony; to which I add a verbal statement of *Judge Cameron*, a gentleman distinguished for the tenacity of his memory, as to names, dates and facts, and whose statement of any thing coming within his own recollection is entitled to the most implicit credit. He states he formed the acquaintance of John McKnitt Alexander as early as 1797—who was

a highly respectable old man; that he conversed with him freely on the subject of the Mecklenburg meeting, and he uniformly gave him the same account as to the Declaration of Independence; that he saw him in 1800 after the burning of his house; that after naming the fact he added most emphatically, "but, *Cameron, the document is safe, as I gave a copy in my own hand writing to Gen. W. R. Darie.*"

This closes the affirmative testimony. I shall now give some important documentary evidence, which has come to light since the foregoing has been published, and which, as I presume, may be considered negative testimony:

1. The letter of the Hon. *Israel Pickens*, a native of Mecklenburg and for some years a member of Congress from this State, dated March, 1823. He says, "he had repeated conversations with John McKnitt Alexander, a venerable old man, proverbial for his scrupulous accuracy in recollecting and detailing events." After referring to the officers and the organization of the meeting in April, 1775, he adds, "The first and only question which gave rise to discussion was, whether it was *then* expedient for the County to declare independence. This question being decided in the affirmative, a formal declaration was unanimously passed, absolving the County from the British Crown." The letter adds, "understanding that Dr. Williamson was about to write the history of North Carolina some twelve years ago, I apprised him of the circumstance of the Mecklenburg Convention. He informed me he had many years previously been informed of it by Gen. Steel and others; but compared the act of anticipation of American Independence, to that whereby Virginia had claimed the title of "the Ancient Dominion," on account of her having declared in favor of Charles the 2nd some time before

the revolution took place in England; both events being expected long before."

2. *Two papers*, furnished by Dr. Alexander, who certifies that they were found by him among some old pamphlets of his father's, the one a *half-sheet* in the hand-writing of John McKnitt Alexander, the other a full sheet in some "*unknown hand*." These papers were stitched together; the half sheet is an old paper, and from its appearance, I should say in all reasonable probability is the oldest manuscript account we have of the meeting of May, 1775. The other sheet gives the same statement and resolutions as published, and has one or two corrections in the hand writing of John McKnitt Alexander. The half sheet, after stating the meeting was held on the 19th May—the names of the chairman and secretary, proceeds, "after a free discussion in order to give relief to America and protect our just and natural rights, 1st, the County, by a solemn and awful vote, dissolved our allegiance to King George and the British nation. 2nd, declared ourselves a free and independent people, having a *right* and *capable* to govern ourselves as a part of North Carolina. 3d, in order to have laws as a rule of life for our future government, we formed a code of laws by adopting our former wholesome laws." Then follow the 4th and 5th rules, substantially as those published. It states the resolutions were adopted on the 20th May, and a copy forwarded by Capt. Jack.

3. *The Resolves of the 31st May, 1775*, as found in the South Carolina Gazette of the 13th June, 1775, and preserved in the Charleston Library:

1. "*Resolved*, That all commissions, civil and military, heretofore granted by the Crown to be exercised in these Colonies, are null and void, and the Constitution of each particular Colony wholly suspended.

2. That the Provincial Congress of each province, under the direction of the great Continental Congress, is invested with all legislative and

executive powers, within their respective provinces, and that no other legislative power does or can exist, at this time in any of these Colonies."

They then go on to provide a system of rules and regulations for the government of the Colony, until such time as others may be passed by the Continental Congress. A copy of the Charleston paper containing these twenty resolves and signed by *Ephraim Brevard, Clerk*, was found in the English Foreign office, enclosed in a dispatch of Governor Wright of the province of Georgia. Governor Martin, in a dispatch of the 13th June, 1775, says he encloses the Cape Fear Mercury, containing "Resolves of the Committee of Mecklenburg, which surpass all the horrid and treasonable publications that the inflammatory spirits of this continent have yet produced." He adds, "*a copy of these resolves were sent off, I am informed, by express to the Congress at Philadelphia as soon as they were passed in the Committee.*" The newspaper alluded to unfortunately has not been found. But beyond doubt, the paper contained the resolutions of the 31st May, as there exists no evidence of the publication of any other at that day. I here close the examination, and regret the necessity I have felt of going so much into detail. Yet it was necessary to give dates, names and acts, in order to a proper understanding of the question. I shall not myself express any opinion as to whether the resolutions of the 20th May, as published, be those as adopted in *hæc verba*, as from the view I take of it, this is not a matter involving the main question; on that point I give the facts and data, from which others may draw their own conclusions. As I care not which set of resolutions the historic or political critic may select, whether those as published in the Register of 1819, or the decrees, as he terms them, of the "half-sheet," in the hand writing of John McKnitt Alexander, or those of the

31st May, as found in the South Carolina Gazette, the GREAT FACT for which I contend is conclusively established, so far as human testimony is capable of establishing any fact: *That to the people of Mecklenburg County is due the high honor of being the first to proclaim themselves Free and Independent of the British Crown.* And I care not whether you fix the date of that Proclamation on the 20th or 31st of May, 1775. The fact stands high above all question, and must ever remain fixed and incontrovertible. Such was the view, such the understanding of the resolves of the 31st May, by Gov. Martin, as appears, not only from the dispatch to which I have already referred, but to his Proclamation of the 8th August, 1775, in which he calls them the "Resolves of a committee for the County of Mecklenburg, most traitorously declaring the entire dissolution of the laws, Government and Constitution of this Country; and setting up a system of rules and regulations repugnant to the laws and subversive of his Majesty's Government." Such too is the opinion of an eminent American author, Jared Sparks, who says he "does not consider the point (as to the authenticity of the resolutions of the 20th May) as of much importance, as the last resolves (31st May) do not differ much in substance and spirit from the other paper." So considering the matter, I here rest the question.

I cannot, however, leave the subject without offering a passing tribute to the memory of EPHRAIM BREVARD, who if not the prime mover of the meeting of May, 1775, was most certainly the author of its resolutions, which cast a lustre around his memory that entitles his name to be enrolled with the immortal *Fifty-Six*, who twelve months thereafter affixed their signatures to the declaration of the 4th July, 1776. The fact is recorded by the Rev. Mr. Foote in his interesting Sketches of

North Carolina, that when a British officer was asked why the house of the widow Brevard was burnt, and her farm plundered, he answered, "Because she has seven sons in the rebel army!" Ephraim Brevard was one of these rebels and the most distinguished of these sons. He was a graduate of Princeton College, educated a Physician, and early distinguished as a political writer in support of resistance against unwarrantable aggression. The paper of the 31st of May and the instructions to the County Delegates of a subsequent date, in point of style, diction and composition, as well as in principle and sentiment, are quite equal to any productions of the day. They shew him to have been the scholar, republican and patriot. But his services were not confined to his pen; he joined the army as a surgeon and was taken prisoner at the surrender of Charleston in May, 1780. How he effected his escape, I am not informed, though I am quite certain his proud spirit did not stoop to claim British "protection" as the price of his discharge. Like the other captives, he endeavored to return to his home in the upper country, encountering great hardships and suffering on the way. As the men could not venture to carry medicine and provisions to their relief, this office of charity was confided to the mothers, sisters and wives of the unfortunate sufferers. Of this number was the mother of ANDREW JACKSON, who, on her return home, being seized with a fever, died in a tent and was buried on the road-side, in an unknown grave; thus falling a victim in the cause of charity and of mercy. Woman!

"O ! who so welcome and so prompt as thou,
 The battles hurried scene and angry glow,
 The death encircled pillow of distress—
 The lonely moments of secluded woe—
 Alike thy care and constancy confess,
 Alike thy pitying hand and fearless friendship bless."

Of the number thus saved, was Ephraim Brevard. He did not long survive, and died at the house of his friend, John McKnitt Alexander; and lies buried at Hopewell Church, with no stone or monument to tell where sleeps the faithful patriot. I regret I have not been able to offer a more worthy tribute to the character of this virtuous man. But after all, the most eloquent can add little to the memory of him, who thus fell in the service of his country. Thy name will live in after ages, and thy example produce in every breast that loves its country, the rapture and enthusiasm of admiration! I trust I may be allowed to relieve the tedium of my discourse, by referring to another revolutionary incident, as creditable to the young ladies of Mecklenburg, as were the resolutions we have been considering, to that of the men. In the South Carolina Gazette of February, 1776, is to be found an editorial article which says, "a North Carolina correspondent who signs himself *Philogumas*, informs us "that the young ladies of the best families in Mecklenburg county have entered into a voluntary association, that they will not receive the addresses of any young gentlemen of that place, except the brave volunteers, who cheerfully served in the expedition to South Carolina and assisted in subduing the Schovolite Insurgents. The ladies being of opinion, (God bless them!) that such persons as lazily stay lurking at home, when the important calls of their country demand their military services abroad, must certainly be destitute of that manliness of sentiment, that brave manly spirit, which qualify the gentleman to be the defender and guardian of the fair sex." History tells us, when the Spartan youth departed to join the camp, it was customary for the mother to deliver him the buckler with the injunction, "Bring this back, or be brought upon it." So the virtuous

mother of the Gracchi, when called upon in a boastful way to exhibit her jewels, pointed to *her sons*. Such doubtless was the spirit that moved and animated the young ladies of Mecklenburg in the formation of their association, and which nerved so many noble females of the revolution to stand firm in the midst of danger when the stoutest hearts were made to quail.

I proceed with my subject. The Provincial Council appointed by the Congress to guard the safety of the Colony, and to carry out the orders of the Continental Congress, adopted the most energetic measures, to meet the threatened danger. "The first drop of blood," said the great Chatham "which is shed in America, will cause a wound which never can be healed." Prophetic anticipation! That drop of blood had been shed, and the ties of allegiance dissolved on the plains of Lexington, and the law of self-preservation invoked as alone adequate for protection. Governor Martin was forced to seek safety on board of a British man-of-war, in the Cape Fear river. Here he issued his commissions and orders to such as still adhered to the royal cause. He commissioned General McDonald, a Highland Chief of influence, as his commander, and by his proclamation called upon all faithful subjects to rally under his banner. The royal standard was erected at Cross Creek, and fifteen hundred men rallied to its support. Col. Moore was in command of the Provincial troops. The royal General very politely proposed, that in order to save him the necessity of shedding blood, Col. Moore and his troops should lay down their arms, take the oath of allegiance, and receive his Majesty's pardon. To this gracious invitation the rebel Colonel returned for answer, that the Royal General should himself surrender, subscribe the test as required by the great Continental Congress, and receive their protection. This answer

was very much in the same Spartan spirit as that related by Governor Martin in one of his indignant dispatches of that date. Those rebels were most insolent fellows, and well calculated to disturb the equanimity of the Royal Courtiers. *A Mr. John Ashe*, as the Governor calls him, had been a Colonel of Militia in New Hanover, which office he resigned. Soon after he appeared in Wilmington, at the head of some 4 or 500 men, and called on the people to subscribe to the association as required by the committee of safety, and when asked for his authority, he pointed to his men. "By this cowardly act," says the dispatch, "the people were forced to comply." Whilst the negotiation was pending between General McDonald and Col. Moore as to which should receive protection, Colonels Caswell and Lillington hastened to the scene of action with such of the militia and minute men as they had been able to collect for the occasion. They met the Royal General under a forced retreat at Moore's Creek Bridge, endeavoring to join Gov. Martin and Gen. Clinton, then expected on our coast with a large detachment of Royal troops. A severe engagement ensued at the Bridge, on the 27th of February, 1776, in which the Royalists were totally defeated, their General taken prisoner and several of their officers killed, and the army either captured or dispersed. The victory was complete, and considering the time, force and circumstances, the result was highly to the credit of the patriots, and attended with the most important consequences. Great preparation had been made by the British Ministry in the winter of 1775-'76, under the calculation that they should be able at once to reduce the Colonies to submission. Twenty-five thousand troops had arrived at New York early in the Spring, and a large portion of this force was ordered to join

Gov. Martin. Fortunately they did not arrive in the Cape Fear until after the defeat of Gen. McDonald. This rendered the victory the more important, as it dispersed the Tories, and gave new life and confidence to the militia. Gen. Clinton soon left the Province and directed his course for Charleston. He was met at Sullivan's Island, where he received a most disastrous repulse, and the fleet and army were forced to leave the country. I have referred to this battle as being among the earliest and most decisive in its consequences, as well as to establish the fact, that the people of the Province were quite as prompt to defend their rights in the field as they had been resolute to assert them in Council. For his good conduct, Colonel Caswell received the thanks of the Congress at Halifax, and was soon after promoted to the rank of Brigadier General, whilst Colonel Lillington was appointed to the command of one of the provincial regiments. No one in the service of the Colony enjoyed such a long, uninterrupted, and unchecked popularity as did RICHARD CASWELL. He entered the Colonial Assembly as early as 1754, then twenty-five years of age; he was repeatedly elected to the Provincial Congress, and was a delegate to the first Continental Congress; he was Comptroller and Treasurer of the State, at periods of great embarrassment; President of the Congress, which formed the State Constitution; the first Governor, an office which he filled for several years, without compensation. In 1789 he was a member of the Convention for the ratification of the Federal Constitution, and at the same time Speaker of the Senate. His highly useful life was here ended by a stroke of paralysis, and he sunk to his grave, "with all his country's honors blest." I come to the last point, I propose to notice in our Colonial history and then close what I have to say on this branch

of my subject. The Continental Congress was still in session. On the 7th June, 1776, Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia, submitted his celebrated resolution, "that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States." It was referred to a committee of the whole ; and, after several days consideration, was postponed until the first day of July, and a committee appointed to draft a declaration in conformity therewith. The Provincial Congress of North Carolina, as well as several of the other Colonial assemblies, were in session at the same time. It was an eventful period, and most emphatically a crisis to try men's souls. But the Congress of North Carolina had the high honor of being the first to "*Resolve*, that the Delegates for this Colony, in the Continental Congress, be empowered to concur with the Delegates of the other Colonies in a "*Declaration of Independence*." This spirited resolution was reported by Cornelius Harnett from a select committee on the 12th April, and unanimously adopted on the same day. The instruction was presented to Congress on the 27th May, in anticipation of Mr. Lee's resolution, and faithfully carried out by the State Delegates, by affixing their names to the Declaration of the 4th July, 1776.

Thus was dissolved the ties of allegiance that bound the Colonies to the mother country. The Rubicon was passed, and these bold patriots had to live as free-men or die as traitors. However interesting it might be to inquire as to the part which was taken by our immediate ancestors in the great contest that followed, I am not permitted by the limits of this address to do so, but leave the history and the battle-fields of Kingsmountain, Cowpens, Guilford and Eutaw Springs—battles as important and as hard fought as any during the revolution—to tell posterity of their existence and of

the noble part which they acted; whilst the Counties which have been honored with the names of Ashe, *Burke, Caswell, Cleaveland, Davidson, Davie, Iredell, Jones, *Moore, McDowell, Nash, Rutherfordton, and Stokes, men distinguished for their services in the Cabinet and in the field, will remain as lasting monuments of the veneration and esteem of a grateful country. The war was closed, freedom had triumphed over the combined efforts of tyranny and oppression, and the thirteen Colonies became free and independent States!

“Tyrants! in vain ye trace the wizard ring;
 In vain ye limit mind’s unwearied spring:
 What! can ye lull the winged winds asleep,
 Arrest the rolling world, or chain the deep?
 No! the wild wave contemns your sceptred hand:
 It roll’d not back when Canute gave command!”

Still a great work remained to be performed. The confederation which had carried the Colonies so triumphantly through a seven years war, was found to be inadequate to the demands of peace. It became necessary to invoke the wisdom and patriotism of those who had achieved our independence to unite in the establishment of a form of government sufficiently strong to secure the privileges and blessings which had been so gloriously achieved. The voice of nature teaches man the important lesson, “that the greater good is to be preferred to the lesser,” whilst political experience instructs him, that the rights and privileges of the few as well as of the many, are alone to be secured by the checks and limitations of a written compact. To secure and perpetuate this great truth was one of the main objects in the formation and adoption of the federal Constitution. Thus the dark days of the revolution

* In honor of Gov. Thomas Burke, act 1777.

* Gen. James Moore.

were closed, the anarchy and confusion that threatened for a time passed away, and the Constitution was ratified and adopted, through their State Conventions, by a free and sovereign people. That Constitution, to borrow one of Mr. Blair's most beautiful figures, "like the sun after the darkness of a tempestuous night, it comes forth in the morning with its brightest lustre, and inspires every breast with gladness, as ascending gradually through the heavens, it converts that whole vast extent, over which its beams are diffused into a region of light; and thus changes entirely the state of objects by arraying all nature into beauty, and transferring it into the image of its own brightness." So, this glorious Magna Charta, like that resplendent luminary extending its blessings over a Union of thirteen sovereign States, with a territory of one million of square miles, since increased to three millions within the existing perimeter of the United States, then inhabited by a population of three millions, since grown and extended to thirty-one States, with a population of near twenty-five millions of people.

Let me now, my young friends, and especially you who are soon to leave these academic shades of study and of science, for the busy pursuits of active life, call your attention to the state, condition, resources and advantages of our own State. Having already trespassed, as I fear, too long on the patience of my audience, I have but little time to devote to this interesting subject: We have in the State a population of near nine hundred thousand, thirty millions of acres of land, with a climate, location, soil, productions, and state of society quite equal to most of our sister States. Its climate is favorable to health, neither running into the extremes of heat in the summer, or the severity of cold in the winter. The soil, if not the most fertile, is unsurpassed in the variety of its staple. In a comparative

view, in the production of Naval Stores, Corn, Tobacco, Wheat and Cotton, it stands above an average rank. In the North and South-eastern Counties the soil is of great fertility, and in addition to its grain and Naval Stores, the Fisheries are of great value. As you advance into the upper country, on the Roanoke, you find the purest water, with every necessary for good living, cultivated and raised in great plenty, with the article of Tobacco for market and that of the first quality. On the Cape Fear and in the Southern Counties, you find the cultivation of Cotton fully rewarding the industrious planter. In the middle and more Western Counties, you find the richest deposits of coal, gold, and iron, a climate and mountain scenery of unsurpassed beauty. These natural deposits of wealth are in the progress of development by an experienced Geologist of high character. We have six large rivers passing from the mountains through the State, and, though not of the best navigation, yet from the productiveness of the adjoining valleys, holding out the strongest inducements to the internal improvement of the State. We have as markets, Wilmington, Newberne, Edenton, Washington, and Elizabeth City, communicating with the Ocean, through Inlets, if not the best, sufficient for all of our present commercial purposes. Wilmington, through the energy and enterprise of her inhabitants, is fast concentrating capital, and forcing herself forward as the most commanding market in the State. Her success is identified with the commercial and agricultural prosperity of the State; and I am happy to believe that success is certain. It was originally settled, as a State's historian tells us, "by merchants and tradesmen, invited by the depth of water, which allowed the approach of vessels of considerable burthen," then called Newton, and in 1739 changed to Wilinington, in com-

pliment to the Earl of Wilmington, the great patron of the then Governor of the Colony. We have also the harbor of Beaufort, the best South of the Chesapeake, and which must, at no distant day, be connected with the interior improvements of the State. Here, then, we have a field for capital, labor, genius and enterprise, calling for exertion and means within the State, the most ample—with a taxable fund of sixty-five millions in Lands, whose assessed value, within a few years will go up to one hundred millions—taxable polls, two hundred thousand, one-third whites and two-thirds slaves—money at interest, and other investments of at least twenty millions, and a banking capital of five millions, besides other objects of taxation affording certain means of revenue amply sufficient for every proper and judicious improvement. And what adds value to such investments, should they fail to give a profitable return directly, like the mountain streams, running in different directions, in different dimensions and at different heights, watering, adorning and fertilizing the fields and meadows through which they pass, such works cannot fail to add greatly to the common property of the State.

This spirit of improvement has been awakened in our land, and the use of that mighty power which the philosophers of old had not dreamed of, but which the genius of modern times has called into its service, and applied to the machinery of active life, the steam engine, has been made to perform, not only the labor of the horse, but of man, and by its varied applications and combinations seems almost possessed of human intelligence. The wagon is in a great measure superseded as a means of market transportation, and vessels of commerce, hitherto dependent on wind and tide, are now propelled by this mighty power. The voyage

from the new to the old world, in days past requiring weeks, is now the work of days. I am proud to say these improvements are now in rapid progress in our own State. We have complete, and in the process of construction, upwards of six hundred miles of Railroad improvements, connecting the Roanoke and the Cape Fear, the Neuse, the Tar, the Yadkin and the Catawba, thus removing those barriers which hitherto have made us an Eastern and Western people, bringing us together into one homogeneous mass and uniting us in one harmonious action. We have in progress another work of modern date, the Plank Road, which promises to revive the fortunes of another old market town, Fayetteville, that so justly merits the fostering care of the State. And by the same means an easy transit is soon to be had from the Capitol of the State *via* Greenville to the flourishing town of Washington. Such are our commercial prospects, the great hand-maid of agriculture. For the improvement of the mind we have a University amply endowed and in a most flourishing condition, with two Colleges liberally patronized, besides town and village Institutions for male and female instruction, not surpassed in any of the sister States. I deal not in mere dreams of fancy, in idle speculations, but in practical realities; and if there be one who claims to be a North Carolinian, whose heart does not glow with pride, and beat with pleasure at the recital of these flattering prospects—who does not desire to see these bright hopes realized and is not prepared to exclaim, “this is my own, my native land,” then I say let him go down—

“To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonored and unsung.”

Here I pause, and invite you to rest in your native

State—to stop the tide of emigration, and join in those great works of improvement that hold out such bright prospects for the future. Choose you the good part. Take your stand in behalf of your mother land; and yield not to the wretched whisperings of the political demagogue, or to the low grumblings and croakings of the discontented. March on with the improvements of the age, not with wild extravagance or Utopian speculations, but with that which is attainable, and within the means of the State, judiciously applied. This much I think I have the right to say, and thus far to urge you to go. And whilst I lay no claim to wisdom's choice endowments, age has sprinkled my brow with the frost of three-score years, more than one-half of which have been spent in the service of the public, and I feel that I can say, with truth and sincerity, whatever may have been the errors of my public life, I have loved and honored my native State, and have on all occasions stood ready, not regarding any political differences of opinion, to act and co-operate with him who has sought to advance her prosperity and to elevate her character. Inspired with these sentiments, I claim the right of addressing you in the language of counsel, of advice, and of admonition. Whatever may be your profession in life, let industry, energy, and perseverance mark your course, whilst truth, virtue, and integrity shall characterize your every act. Learn to imitate the virtuous, the wise, and the good, and obey that most sublime of all commandments, the rule of him who said to each and all of us, "Love your neighbor: Do unto others, as thou would'st be done by." Above all, I entreat you to avoid those scenes of dissipation so tempting to youth, whose fruits however bright and sweet to the taste, never fail to produce those blighted hopes and promises, so common in the life of man—fruits so like the

tailed apples of the Dead Sea, fresh and beautiful to the sight, but when tasted full of bitterness and ashes. Reject then, I beseech you, the poisoned cup which the enchantress pleasure holds up to the lip, and remember what Anacharassis hath said of the vine, "it bears the three grapes of Drunkenness, of Pleasure, and of Sorrow," and happy it is if the last can cure the mischiefs which the former hath entailed. Whilst you thus guard your conduct as individuals, and fulfil your duties as citizens of the State, remember you are citizens of a great Republic, which also claims your allegiance. Remember too, that no where has Liberty so splendid a Temple erected to her service as in these United States, and that in vain shall the serpents of faction hiss around her altar, if our people shall fully understand and duly appreciate her blessings. I know that I stand on sacred ground, and I assure you I would not even, if allowable, lead you into the political meshes and partisan contentions of the day. But I think I am not violating that which is due to the place and the occasion, when I call upon you to stand by your country and its Constitution—that Constitution, which as you have heard, cost the Conscript Fathers of the land such mighty efforts to establish. And whilst thus exhorting you to a faithful discharge of your duty as citizens, I do not know that I could give you better counsel than that you should follow the advice of the wise, the good, and the illustrious WASHINGTON in his Farewell Address, and likewise that you should study the republican principles, sound and constitutional, as you shall find them recorded in President Jefferson's first Inaugural. These great names, "like the mountain cedar," will ever extend their protective branches over the land. And so long as the advice and principles, as given in these immortal documents, shall be followed

out and adhered to, the Constitution of the land, the Union of the States, the rights and liberties of the people will remain fixed and immutable, like the firm rock, resisting the assaults of the ocean and bidding defiance to the depredations of time.

22 Sept: 1852.

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